

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESSURES ON THE CEASEFIRE

REF: (A) BELFAST 115 (B) BELFAST 111

1. THERE MUCH CURRENT SPECULATION BUT LITTLE REAL INSIGHT ON REASONS PROVISIONALS WOULD END CEASEFIRE NOW (REFTEL A). GUESSES INCLUDE: (A) PEACE AND POLITICS BLOC HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN ABLE TO WRING ADEQUATE CONCESSIONS FROM HMG OR TO ESTABLISH SUFFICIENTLY SOLID POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN NORTH TO CONVINCE HAWKS THAT THIS TACTIC SUCCESSFUL (B) IRA DECLARATION OF CEASEFIRE WERE MERELY TACTICAL PLOYS FOR BREATHER TO ENABLE PROVISIONALS REGROUP AND REARM. LIGHTER PRESSURE FROM SECURITY FORCES TOGETHER WITH RELEASE DETAINEES DURING CEASEFIRE HAS PERMITTED PROVISIONAL "MILITARY" CAPABILITY BE RESTORED, (C) FUND COLLECTIONS USA MORE DIFFICULT DURING CEASEFIRE PERIOD, AND (D) PROVISIONAL DIFFICULTIES WITH AUTHORITIES IN REPUBLIC REQUIRE FACE-SAVING OPERATION IN NORTH.

2. BY RATIONAL MEASUREMENT PROVISIONAL IRA SEEMS HAVE LITTLE ACTUAL PROVOCATION RESUME HOSTILITIES NOW. THERE HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIAL RELEASES DETAINEES AND MILITARY PRESENCE REPUBLIC
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AREAS REDUCED. STATISTICS STILL AWAITED BUT IMPRESSION CONGEN

IS ARMY ARMS SEARCH AND SEIZURE OPERATIONS SINCE INCEPTION SECOND PHASE CEASEFIRE FEBRUARY DIRECTED MORE AGAINST LOYALIST GROUPS THAN REPUBLICANS. WANTED INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS SEAMUS TWOMEY AND DAVID O'CONNELL HAVE MOVED ABOUT IN REPUBLICAN AREAS WITH IMPUNITY AND PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN HAS BEEN ALLOWED CREATE A TENUOUS POLITICAL "PRESENCE".

3. IN ABSENCE PROVOCATION IT FOLLOWS LOGICALLY THAT IF PROVISIONALS RESUME HOSTILITIES NOW THEY MUST HAVE SOME LONG TERM GOAL IN MIND. ANY CHANCE FOR THE PROCEEDINGS OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION TO MOVE TOWARD RECONCILIATION OF COMMUNITIES IN POLITICAL TERMS DEPENDS UPON ACCRETION OF MODERATION WHICH IN TURN DEPENDS UPON ENVIRONMENT OF PEACE. IT BELIEVED STRATEGY NORTHERN PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN AT LEAST IS TO PERMIT PEACE PREVAIL IN EXPECTATION THAT UNDER BEST CIRCUMSTANCES CONVENTION WILL FAIL DEMONSTRABLY (REFTEL B) PROVISIONALS MAY DECIDE THAT CHANCE CONVENTION MIGHT SUCCEED IS TOO GREAT TO RISK. HOWEVER THERE ARE LOGICAL ARGUMENTS TO POSE AGAINST RESUMPTION HOSTILITIES NOW. PROVISIONALS HAVE NEITHER GAINED MORE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR VIOLENCE NOR EVEN OVERCME THE ALIENATION OF THE POPULACE BY THE VIOLENCE OF LATE 1974. IT PROBABLE RESUMPTION VIOLENCE NOW WOULD FURTHER ALIENATE MINORITY POPULATION ULSTER AND ULTIMATELY FURTHER WEAKEN SUPPORT FOR PROVISIONALS. IT DIFFICULT ENVISAGE WHAT PROVISIONALS COULD HOPE GAIN FROM HMG BY RENEWED TERRORISM NOW. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS COULD CONCEIVABLY MAKE GESTURE OF MEETING WITH PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN AND PROVIDING DEMANDED EXPLANATION FOR WOUNDING BY ARMY OF PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN MEMBERS (REFTEL A). GOVERNMENT CANNOT HOWEVER MAKE SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS SUCH AS IMMEDIATE END DETENTION OR WITHDRAWAL TROOPS TO BARRACKS WITHOUT RISK SEVERE LOYALIST BACKLASH.

4. LOGIC NOT RPT NOT ALWAYS APPARENT IN PROVISIONAL DECISION HOWEVER AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT INTERNAL PRESSURES AND OTHER FACTORS WILL LEAD ORGANIZATION RETURN TO TERRORISM. SHOULD IT DO SO MOST IMMEDIATE PRESSURE IN VIEW OF ULSTER MOOD WILL BE FOR TROOPS TO END IT ONCE FOR ALL.SPICER

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